



CAFTA FACTS

**This CAFTA Will Not Promote Security, Democracy and Prosperity
It's Time to Renegotiate**

The administration's argument that opponents of the poorly negotiated Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) oppose all trade with Central America is simply false.

Opponents of *this* CAFTA are not calling for no trade, but instead a renegotiated CAFTA that will promote fair and better trade.

The administration continues to mislead with the wrong-headed notion that by exploiting poor workers and promoting the agendas of multinational corporations, America will expand democracy and increase national security.

If the administration is going to pursue this illogical rhetoric, they have some questions to answer.

How do we promote national security by privatizing these poor nations' water systems and public services?

How do we promote democracy by inserting provisions in CAFTA that call for secret international tribunals to make decisions affecting America's public health and safety laws—subverting America's sovereignty?

How do we promote prosperity by extending drug patents beyond U.S. law—making it more difficult for AIDS patients and the terminally ill in these nations to receive life-saving medicines?

How do we promote democracy when pharmaceutical companies and other select industries are granted a seat at negotiations while every single elected Democrat was excluded?

More than 40 percent of workers in the Central America for less than two dollars a day, placing them below the global poverty level. How does CAFTA ensure that wages will increase to benefit workers?

If CAFTA helps workers, why does it allow the Central American nations to weaken their already sub-standard labor laws after the agreement is enacted?

Why are trade sanctions, an effective trade enforcement mechanism, available for violations of the intellectual property provisions of the agreement, but not for violations of labor and environmental provisions? Why do we short-change workers and our global environment?

The administration casually dismisses labor unions, environmental groups, human rights groups, sugar growers, family farmers and ranchers, religious groups and Hispanic and Latino interest groups as narrow interests—but that is a broad range of groups.

Meanwhile, the only supporters of this agreement are a limited, albeit wealthy, profit-driven business group. Can we really trust them to do what is best for workers, the environment, and community investment, both in the United States and Central America?

While opponents of CAFTA gather by the hundreds in public places—elected Democrats and Republicans, House Members and Senators, labor unions, environmental groups, manufacturers, farmers, ranchers—CAFTA supporters hunker down behind closed doors to manipulate backdoor deals. With all the talk of democracy, why all the secrecy?

Proponents of the status quo argue that free trade promotes democracy, but they turn a blind eye to rising human rights abuses, coerced labor, slave labor, and government-forced abortions in nations with preferential trade status like China.

Supporters of CAFTA conveniently fail to mention that democracy in Mexico recently suffered a severe setback when Mexico's legislators voted almost unanimously to strip the popular mayor of Mexico City and political rival, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, of official immunity on a technicality.

The goal was to imprison him and knock him out of the 2006 presidential race. The official U.S. State Department response: silence.

The administration talks a tough game on democracy when it's politically convenient, but fails to deliver consistently.

Mexico now ranks as one of the world's ten largest economies, in excess of \$600 billion per year. While overall wealth increased since passing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), poverty has also increased.

NAFTA's, now CAFTA's, supporters, always fail to include wealth distribution and income disparity figures when discussing NAFTA's alleged success.

In Mexico ten percent of the population controls roughly 50 percent of the nation's wealth, and 50 percent of its citizens live in poverty. While the wealthiest in the nation have made great economic gains, the poor continue to earn under \$5 dollars a day.

There is no burgeoning middle class in Mexico—just another of NAFTA's failed promises. How can the administration say this income disparity and inequality is progress?

We promote democracy by ensuring prosperity for all, not just a select few. This CAFTA fails to do that.

We protect our own borders and security by protecting workers and families in our sister countries by raising wages and improving their standard of living. This CAFTA fails to do so.

We help our neighbors at home and overseas by creating healthy and safe communities through worker protections and investments in the environment. This CAFTA fails to do this.

We ensure democracy when we conduct trade negotiations openly and publicly, not by doing so behind closed doors. We ensure fairness by allowing all parties, and all labor, environmental, and business groups a seat at the table, not by inviting select industries and spurning opposing political parties. CAFTA's negotiators failed to do this.

When the CEOs of this many multinational corporations are aligned with the Bush administration in praising CAFTA as beneficial for workers, you know it's time to worry.

This CAFTA fails to promote fair trade, it fails to protect workers and the environment, and it fails to raise living standards both for the United States and our Central American neighbors.

I am not against trade with our good friends and neighbors in Central America, in fact I strongly support it. I am only against this failed CAFTA.

This CAFTA is dead in the water. It's time to renegotiate a better CAFTA—one that benefits all, not just a few. One that all Members of Congress and the American people will support.